

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dame Durden," "My Lord Conceil,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER VIII.

"KEEP YOURSELF UNSPOTTED FROM THE
WORLD."

"I want to speak to you," said Adrian Lyle to Kenyon that night. "There is no one in the smoking-room just now. Will you come there?"

Something in the gravity of the clergyman's face and tone struck the young man. He felt uncomfortable. He rose, however, and sauntered lazily through the vestibule and passages to the room indicated.

The two young men lit their cigars, and seated themselves on one of the many lounges scattered about. The deep-seated gravity in Adrian Lyle's eyes met the curious and somewhat uncomfortable gaze of Neale Kenyon's. It was the latter who broke silence.

"What is the important matter?" he asked.

"Kenyon," said the young clergyman, with that straightforward simplicity which was his notable characteristic, "you must not think I am intrusive, or that I presume upon the cordiality of our chance acquaintanceship, if I put to you a question that has been troubling me not a little. Is your marriage quite—straightforward?"

All the colour faded out of Kenyon's face, but his eyes flashed wrathfully.

"Your question," he said insolently, "is a strange one, though men of your cloth are proverbial for meddling. May I ask why you should think there was anything wrong about it?"

"Yes," answered Adrian Lyle. "From something your wife let fall, I learned her position and circumstances. She is young, innocent, trusting. That, of course, is no news to you. Her loneliness, and the absence of all other friends or relatives, embolden me to put this question. If you assure me it is all right and satisfactory I will believe you. Kenyon, for Heaven's sake don't prevaricate. That she loves you with all her heart and soul is plain to see. Tell me is she really—your wife?"

Neale Kenyon took the cigar from his lips, and flicked off the grey ash carelessly.

"You are a—clergyman," he said. "I know interference is part of your office. Pray do you put these questions to all the couples you chance to meet on their honeymoon?"

"I think," Adrian Lyle said quietly, "that it would be better to answer my question in the spirit I put it, than try to pick a quarrel with me for what is only a pardonable interest in your young wife. She is such a child!"

"A child with whose innocent confidence you have been tampering!" burst out Kenyon in sudden anger. "You are not the first of your cloth who has deemed it a duty to weaken the love, or destroy the confidence that should exist between husband and wife!"

"I think," said Adrian Lyle with dignity, "that if, instead of abusing me or my profession vaguely, you would give me the simple assurance I ask for, it would be better for all parties. It is not so unnatural for one gentleman to seek from another the security of a woman's honour, that you should resent my doing so."

"A woman's honour," said Kenyon, replacing his cigar, "is her husband's consideration."

"Then I am to consider my question answered," said Adrian Lyle eagerly; "and I will beg your pardon for my doubts. It only seemed to me that as her religion is not yours, some legal formalities might have been neglected. If"—and he coloured and hesitated—"if you would like me to read the ceremony of your own Church—"

Neale Kenyon laughed harshly. "My good sir," he said, "I really have none. All creeds, doctrines, and denominations, are pretty much the same to me. I give you candour for candour, you see."

Adrian Lyle rose to his feet. "A woman," he said sternly, "is always generous where she loves. Experience has not taught me that the case holds good with men. The greater the trust, the deeper is often the deception."

"Your experience," sneered Kenyon, "seems to have been singularly unfortunate—even for a clergyman."

"You might do me the justice," said Adrian Lyle, "to meet me on equal ground as one man of honour meets another. Had anyone—not of my order—put the question to you that I have put—"

"I should have kicked him out of the room!" interrupted Kenyon, springing to his feet, and speaking with a passion that the occasion scarcely seemed to warrant. "That is how I should have answered an impertinence as unwarrantable as yours!"

Adrian Lyle looked at the flushed, handsome young face, with pained, proud eyes.

"Perhaps you are right to resent my question," he said in a low, but still calm voice. "In your place I might have done the same. No one but a brute or a villain could have had the heart to deceive an innocent, trusting child like—like your wife. But,"—and he lifted his head, and shook back the dark hair from his brow—"your anger is a welcome relief to my doubts. I feel I have done my duty. If, as you seem to think, I have overstepped the bounds of courtesy or prudence, I can only repeat—I ask your pardon. You might easily grant it," he added, with that winning smile which lent his face so rare a charm, "for after to-night it is extremely improbable that we shall meet again. I leave Rome to-morrow morning. Therefore," and he frankly extended his hand, "say you forgive me, Kenyon, if only for the sake of the pleasant days and hours we have spent together."

He had tossed aside the cigar which he had scarcely smoked, and, in fact, had taken up more as an excuse to be companionable.

The light fell on his face, and its nobility and power seemed to stand out in grand relief against the sullenness and gloom of Kenyon's. The latter, half-reluctantly, touched the outstretched hand.

"I—I bear you no ill-will," he said. "I dare say it did seem a little strange; and Gretchen could not have enlightened you much. But I give you my word of honour, she is my wife, and the world shall know her as such. Will that content you?"

"Perfectly," said Adrian Lyle cordially, and with a glad belief in the acknowledgment he had scarcely hoped to win. "And now you will excuse me if I leave you. There are some necessary arrangements to make, and I have a long journey before me to-morrow."

"It is a pity to leave Rome so soon, is it not?" said Kenyon. "You have scarcely seen anything of it."

"I think," answered Adrian Lyle, with that quiet smile which seemed to mean so much, "that it is better for me to go before I see—more."

"Of course you are the best judge," Kenyon said indifferently.

He was angry with his own anger; nor would he confess, even to himself, that it was a relief to think of Adrian Lyle's absence.

"I must be more careful in future," he said to himself. "There shall be no more picking up chance acquaintances; they are apt to turn out troublesome. However, I have got out of this very well."

The sound of the closing door fell upon his inward reflections, and roused him. He was alone—alone and at the mercy of such conscience as he still possessed.

A sudden paroxysm of fear seized him.

"I hope," he said, "that he believes; that he won't make enquiries. Pshaw! Why should I fear, even if he did? Nothing would induce her to leave me. Nothing would induce me to leave her. The absence of some paltry formalities can't weaken a man's honour or his love; and she is safe with me."

Safe with him! How many a man has said those same words in similar case! How many a man has been led to forswear them when the trance of passion is over—when the glamour of love is past!

It was not of this that Kenyon thought now. To him, at this time, Gretchen was as purely and surely his wife, as though a dozen bishops had consecrated their union, and all the laws of the land had sealed their marriage ritual. At this time; but

he had not yet asked himself, how long would it last? "I should never fail her; I never could," Kenyon muttered, as he paced to and fro the deserted room. "On the whole, though, I am glad that fellow has gone. He had a knack of making one uncomfortable, and he would have ended by putting fancies into Gretchen's head. For the future, it is best she should have only me!"

The hotel omnibus stood before the door early the next morning, and Adrian Lyle had just tossed his travelling-bag into the interior. He left his heavy luggage behind, for he had resolved to penetrate into those wild mountainous districts which form the boundary between the Papal States and the kingdom of Naples.

Adrian Lyle was at present possessed with an intense, overmastering desire for solitude. He wanted to get away from even civilisation and comfort, to—so to speak—have out with himself these inward conflicts and inclinations; these weak yieldings to temptation; this forgetfulness of the aims and objects of that high mission with which he was entrusted—before he should again take up the burden of his life's duties, and labour in the toil and heat of the world's great vineyard.

It was so early that he had no fear of seeing the Kenyons. He had no wish to do so. Yet, as he stood there, with the morning sunlight shining over the broad piazza, and the cool, fresh air fanning his brow, a light hand touched his arm, a voice, whose music sent a strange thrill to his heart, murmured: "Where do you go so early, Mr. Lyle?"

It was Gretchen.

For a second or two he stood quite still, unable to frame a word. Then with an effort, he spoke:

"Did not your husband tell you? I am going to do a little mountaineering. I want to get out of the pale of civilisation for awhile. That Sabine range has been tempting me ever since I first beheld it."

"And where do you go first?"

"To Velletri," he said. "Then I intend to walk on to Segni."

"And—when do you come back?" she asked timidly.

"I am not quite sure," he said, with a strange hesitation. "Perhaps I may not see you again."

"Oh, that is hard," she cried, with so true a ring of regret in her voice that it smote him to the heart. "I had so much

to say—so much to ask," she went on hurriedly. "And you know you promised to help me. Oh, I feel so ignorant, so helpless—and—and I dare not even go to any of the priests for counsel, for Neale does not wish it."

There was such appeal in her face, such yearning in her eyes, that for a moment all the man's self-command was shaken. For a moment his conscience seemed to rebuke him with cowardice. Suppose a day should come when this struggling soul might be required at his hands—when, in answer to question or demand, he could but say: "I was like the Levite of old, I passed by on the other side!"

The struggle was sharp but short. He turned from the clinging hands, the beseeching eyes.

"My child," he said, "you have your husband. Take to him your doubts, your fears, your sorrows. I—even if I would—must not interfere between you, unless he expressly desires it."

"But," she said timidly, "you do not understand. Neale will not speak with me of—the things you did. He says he has no creed at all; that I may keep to my own, or any other, it does not matter."

"And are you not happy," he asked—"happy enough to trust and believe in the doctrines and tenets of your own Church? If accident had not thrown me in your way—what then?"

"I suppose I should have been content, then," she said almost regretfully. "But you see, Mr. Lyle, I did meet you, and you—made me think."

The blood seemed to ebb away from Adrian Lyle's face, leaving it cold and colourless as marble. "I am sorry," he said abruptly, almost as it were against his will.

"And I think I am sorry, too," said Gretchen with a sigh. "For I can't forget—and I can't go back to what I was, and I have no one to explain or to teach, since I must not go to the priests. But," and her face brightened, "perhaps we shall meet again after all. You may return from the mountains even before I leave Rome; and meanwhile I will think over all you have told me, and try to understand your religion, for it seems a very beautiful one—"

"Perhaps," Adrian Lyle interposed hurriedly, "we may meet again. If you need me, I think we will. Meanwhile, do not vex your mind with doubts and fears. Religion

—the purest and highest form of religion—is a very simple thing, believe me. It can be summed up in few words. ‘Do good to others, and—keep yourself unspotted from the world.’ That sounds hard, perhaps, to those who know what the world is; but it is possible, even without the barricade of convent walls and bodily martyrdom.”

“I will remember,” she said gladly. “Ah, I see you must go now. Indeed, I am very sorry. Do—do say you will try and see us again.”

“I will,” he said very low, but very earnestly, “if your husband desires it.”

Then he turned away and left her standing there in the early sunlight, with softly troubled eyes, and so strange a regret on her eloquent young face that it needed no words to convince him how sincere her sorrow was.

“After all,” he muttered to himself, as the vehicle jolted and rolled over the uneven Roman streets, “after all, what a coward I am! It is not for her sake I am leaving—only for my own.”

CHAPTER IX. THE POISON OF DOUBT.

WHEN Bari came to his master for his orders for the day, Neale Kenyon noticed that he loitered about the room as if he wished to say something more than he had already done.

“Is anything the matter?” the young Englishman asked uneasily. “No one arrived here that I know—eh, Bari?”

“No, Monsieur,” answered the man readily. “I keep a look-out for that. But—but is Monsieur aware the English clergyman has left?”

“Yes,” answered Kenyon sharply. “What of that?”

“Nothing, only Monsieur may perhaps congratulate himself on the fact. The gentleman was too curious, and—had too strong an admiration for Madame.”

Kenyon wheeled round and faced him. “What makes you say so?”

“Oh, many things,” answered the Italian. “I am observant, as Monsieur knows, and I have not too great an admiration for gentlemen of the cloth, as Monsieur also knows. The clergyman is young, and handsome, and clever, and Madame has for him a great interest. So great that she came down to see him off, and procure his address.”

Kenyon’s brow grew dark. “Is that true?” he said hoarsely.

“Quite true,” answered Bari. “They had a long conversation—religious, of course. Mr. Lyle has hopes of converting Madame. He assured her they would meet again.”

“Did he?” said Kenyon scoffingly. “Perhaps he will find someone else has a voice in that little matter.”

“I—I do not think it wise that Madame should ever have been permitted to be too confidential with him,” said Bari. “Religion has for women so strange a charm, and the priest is so attractive in that he is the man and yet—the priest. Monsieur must remember that all the early life of Madame has been steeped in religious fervour—that it is a part of herself. If denied the consolations of her own Church, she seeks another. But something of that sort she must have; it is the fault of her education, her home, her surroundings. Even the good Lisschen was very devout,” he added with a smile.

Kenyon’s face grew darker and darker. “Her religion shall be—me,” he was saying to himself. “The clergy understand the value of women; but I have no intention of permitting interference between Gretchen and myself. Adrian Lyle is a fine fellow, but he is a priest, and like all his order, he puts forward the feelers of curiosity under the garb of spiritual interest.”

Aloud he said: “I am quite aware of Mr. Lyle’s plans, Bari, for he informed me of them last night. He will not come across our path again.”

The man bowed, but a curious smile crossed his lips. “I am glad to hear it,” he said quietly. “I do not think Mr. Lyle is a friend of Monsieur’s.”

Kenyon was doomed to be irritated for many days by the constant mention of Adrian Lyle. Gretchen was full of regret at his departure, of fear that he might come to harm among the lawless “contrabandieri”; full too of lamentations respecting questions she had failed to put, or doubts she might have solved.

Bari had been right when he said that in the present state of her mind, she longed for the consolations of religion. She had been used to depend on priestly guidance and direction. She now found herself cut adrift from it entirely, and that too in scenes and places only too well calculated to awaken the memories of her carefully instilled faith. Every procession, every church open at all hours to all comers, every roadside shrine, every chime of bells, or chant of choristers, seemed a rebuke to her.

Even at this early stage she had learned that to speak of such feelings to Kenyon displeased him. That was one reason why she so missed Adrian Lyle. As long as their conversation ran in the safe grooves of Art, or spent itself in question and answer, or sought historical information, all was well; but, as day after day passed on, and they grew familiarised with Rome, Gretchen found that Kenyon had as little sympathy with her favourite Madonnas or Saints, as she could summon up for the broken and discoloured statues of Venus, or the torsos of Hercules, or the Etruscan bronzes and Pompeian relics about which he raved.

"I have had enough of the Old Masters," he said laughingly one day. "We have seen so many of their works. Doesn't it strike you that there is a marvellous lack of variety in their subjects? Priestcraft has been the ruin of Art. Fancy what these fellows might have done had they been left uninfluenced! But they had no wider scope of subject than the Madonna, or the Saints. I am sick of both. I believe that man stuck full of arrows is a humbug; and as for the others, with what Mark Twain rightly calls their individual 'trade marks,' I decline to see anything saintly about them. It is my belief that if a half or even a third of the people who visit Italy spoke out their honest opinions, they would say its Art is simply an idealised antiquity. Why, perhaps our own modern paintings may acquire these same deep tones, and shades, and softness of colour, centuries hence. But the world has surely advanced enough to admit that the subject and treatment of a picture is more really Art than the fact of mixing colours. Fancy if we walked through a modern gallery, and found that every second or third picture was a repetition of one subject! How horribly monotonous! I am sure we must have seen some five hundred St. Sebastians, and double as many Madonnas, and some scores of Judiths and Susannas. Is it not so?"

"Yes," Gretchen confessed. "I think there are a great many similar subjects. But the great painters doubtless lived simple and devout lives, and did their best to please Heaven."

"I dare say they did their best to fill their pockets," answered Kenyon scoffingly. "Art may be a divinity to worship, but she must also be a divinity that pays."

Gretchen sighed.

They were standing by the fountain of

Trevi, and her eyes were watching the water as it dashed over the broken heap of massive rock which so well simulates Nature's handiwork.

"I do not think I understand Art at all," she said gently. "Only sometimes a Madonna's face will touch me, or the patience and sadness in some Christ's eyes draw tears to my own; but these are the pictures you dislike."

"I dislike what is superstitious and untrue," answered Kenyon. "I do not profess to know much about Art or artists. I think they are an incomprehensible race of beings myself. They claim something they call 'ideality.' It may be very grand, but I think it is also very uncomfortable. Look at sculpture, now! What is that but repetition? We laugh to scorn the traditions of gods and goddesses. We call Olympus and its deities a fable, but they alone are sacred to one special Art, and a man may take any specimen of womanhood or manhood, call it into the life of marble, christen it Venus or Psyche, Diana or Bacchus, Hercules or Daphne, and straightway it becomes classic! Really, the more we think of life, the more assured we must become that it is one vast humbug!"

"Do not sweep away my faith in everything," said Gretchen, laughing, "unless you can give me something better. I can't have you growing 'cynical,' as Mr. Lyle used to say when you made these remarks. I wish he were here to argue with you," she went on regretfully. "I am not clever enough; I can only agree."

"That is much better," said Kenyon, drawing her hand into his arm and moving on across the sunlit square. "For then, I feel satisfied with myself. Sympathy is a very comfortable thing."

"Is England at all like this?" she asked presently. "I seem to know so little about it, and you rarely speak of it."

A shade passed over the young man's handsome face. "It is not at all like this," he said. "The air is certainly not dream-haunted. And," with a short laugh, "I certainly can never remember feeling poetic or fervid there, as you have so frequently accused me of becoming. The hunting is very jolly," he added, relapsing into commonplace, "and life is very comfortable. You foreign nations don't seem to know what home life is."

"No?" queried Gretchen meekly. "Yet they say the English and the Germans are so much alike in that respect."

"Wait till you see John Bull as he is," laughed Kenyon. "Then tell me where the points of resemblance begin or end."

"Are we going there soon?" she asked.

"I—I suppose so," he answered. "This wandering life must come to an end, sweet as it is. I often wonder if you will like England," he added doubtfully.

"I shall like any place where you are," she answered, with love's sweet certainty of a future with which the joys of the present will be eternally blended.

"But," hesitated Kenyon, "I may not be able to be with you always. I mean as we are now. Life can't be a continuous honeymoon, sweetheart!"

"Of course not," she answered gravely. "I shall not expect to keep you by me every hour. I should not like to interfere with your duties. I have not forgotten that you are a soldier. You have been a long time away, have you not?"

"Yes," he said, "on account of my eyes. Thank goodness, they're all right now."

"Do you remember," she said, with that pretty shyness which still lent her love so great a charm, "do you remember how you deceived me at first about your sight? I felt so sorry. I thought you really were blind and alone, and so I went and spoke to you."

"For which fact I shall be ever grateful," interpolated Kenyon.

"But it was not quite fair of you, all the same," she said gravely.

"Don't tell me you are sorry for it, though," he said, laughing. "Really I could not help myself. Your unconscious soliloquy had interested me so much, and the opportunity was too tempting."

"Oh, I am not sorry—now," she answered readily, "and I am sure I never shall be; but how little I thought——"

"How little one ever thinks!" interrupted Kenyon, almost sharply. Innocent, unconscious words like these were like a sharp touch of pain, the recurrent stab of some remorse that probed his heart when he was off his guard.

"I suppose so," she said. "But after all, what does it matter? Everything must have a beginning. Only it seems strange that what at the time we hardly notice, should become a matter of important results."

"You are becoming quite a philosopher," laughed Kenyon. "But I would rather you were the childish maiden of the woods who apostrophised cross old Lisschen."

"I wonder how she is now," said Gretchen suddenly. "How they all are," she added remorsefully. "Ah," and she looked at Kenyon with all that awakened soul in her deep soft eyes, "I can never be like I was then. When I look back on that day, I feel as if years must have passed over my head."

"Don't speak so solemnly, it is like a reproach to me," said Kenyon; "and," hurriedly and almost with passion, "reproach from you I could never bear—I, who have altered all your life."

"But made it such a happy one," she said tenderly.

And their eyes met under deep shadows of those mossy haunted woods of beautiful Borghese, and amidst the tempered glory of leaf and sunlight, and the warm spring loveliness of the drowsy noon, they told again the old tale which still held for both its golden charm, which still was sweet to ear and heart as when its first murmurs broke the silence of the lonely woods of Dornbach.

GENERAL McCLELLAN.

THE story of the great Civil War in America is being told by instalments. Grant, Lee, and Lincoln have each contributed chapters, and now General McClellan has given to the world his "own story" of his life, of the war, and of the part he took in it. The book* is published after his death, and its editor, Dr. W. C. Prime, assures us that the narrative was not written by the General with a view to publication, but entirely with the object of leaving to his children a faithful record of his military and political career, so that they might know how much he had been wronged, and how constantly he had followed his duty. If there is an occasional tinge of petulance, and a considerable exhibition of egoism in the narrative, one cannot be surprised when the personality of the man and the object of his writing are kept in mind. Possibly had McClellan been writing with the set object of publication, he might have left as calm, and dispassionate, and admirable a record as did General Grant. But "other men, other manners," and McClellan never had the brilliant gift of silence which characterised Grant.

* "McClellan's Own Story." By George B. McClellan, late Major-General Commanding the United States Armies. London: Sampson Low, Marston and Co.

Those of our readers who can carry their minds back to the terrible days of the American War, will recall how the name of McClellan was always at first among the most prominent on the side of the Federal armies. How and why he gradually sank into the background has never, perhaps, been quite understood by English people.

George Brinton McClellan was not one of the ready-made soldiers of the Rebellion. He was the son of a doctor, in Philadelphia; was born in 1826, and, after completing his schooling, entered the Military Academy at West Point, in his sixteenth year. Graduating in 1846, he was commissioned as Second Lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers, and immediately afterwards was sent to take part in the war then in progress with Mexico; the very war in which Grant also received his "baptism of fire," and in which the future commander of the Confederate armies, General Lee, also took part. McClellan served with gallantry and credit, and he was promoted to First Lieutenant, and then to Captain, in acknowledgement of his services. When the Mexican War closed he was in command of the Corps of Engineers, and brought it back to West Point, serving with it there down to 1851. The following year he was one of the Red River Exploring Expedition, and a year later he was employed in exploring the route of the projected Pacific Railway.

In 1855, he was one of the Army officers selected by the United States Government to go to Europe in order to obtain information regarding the latest developments in military science, and to watch the practical working of the new systems in the Crimea.

It is curious that the Minister who made the appointments to this Special Commission was Jefferson Davis, then United States Secretary for War, but afterwards President of the Confederate States.

The party of which young McClellan formed one, were hospitably received by the British Government, although neither the French nor the Russians would have anything to say to them. They went to the Crimea, and under the wing of General Simpson, they were afforded every opportunity of watching military operations on a larger scale than ever they had seen before. Returning to America, McClellan was transferred to the Cavalry, in which he held the rank of Captain; but in 1857 he resigned, on being offered the post of Chief Engineer to the Illinois

Central Railroad. Later, he became Vice-President of that Railway; and still later, President of the Eastern Division of the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad.

In 1860 he married, and took up his residence in Cincinnati, Ohio. There he was settled—engaged in railroad business—when the war began. He immediately abandoned his profitable commercial undertaking, and placed his services at the disposal of the Federal Government.

On the twenty-third of April, 1861, he was commissioned Major-General of Volunteers in Ohio; on the fourteenth of May he was made Major-General in the United States Army and placed in command of the Department of the Ohio; and in July of the same year, after having driven the Secessionists from Western Virginia, he was summoned to Washington, and placed in command of the Army of the Potomac.

The promotion was startlingly rapid, but then so also were events at that time, and the United States had few trained and experienced officers to place in charge of the enormous armies which were being created.

When summoned to Washington, McClellan found the capital in considerable peril, for the defeat at Bull Run had demoralised both the Administration and the Army. He at once set to work to organise the defences, and to restore military order. But as soon as he had made the capital safe, the "politicians" began once more to direct affairs, and to interfere in things which should have been left entirely to the President and the Generals. With regard to McClellan's own political attitude, we find the following in the Autobiography:

"Soon after my arrival in Washington in 1861, I had several interviews with prominent Abolitionists—of whom Senator Sumner was one—on the subject of slavery. I invariably took the ground that I was thoroughly opposed to slavery, regarding it as a great evil, especially to the whites of the South; but that in my opinion, no sweeping measure of emancipation should be carried out, unless accompanied by arrangements providing for the new relations between employers and employed, carefully guarding the rights and interests of both; and that were such a measure framed to my satisfaction, I would cordially support it. Mr. Sumner replied—others also agreed with him—that such points did not concern us, and that all that must be

left to take care of itself. My reply was, that no real statesman could ever contemplate so sweeping and serious a measure as sudden and general emancipation, without looking to the future, and providing for its consequences; that four-and-a-half millions of uneducated slaves should not suddenly be manumitted without due precautions taken, both to protect them and to guard against them; that just there was the point where we differed radically and probably irreconcilably."

On the whole, then, it would seem that McClellan's ideas about the Slave question were pretty much what we have already seen were Lincoln's, until long after, when Abolition became politically ripe.

For the rest, it does not appear that McClellan had associated himself as yet prominently with either of the great political parties, although he was rapidly becoming an object of dread to some of the party leaders. He was a Democrat, and a follower of that Stephen A. Douglas whom Lincoln had conquered in debate; but he was not an ardent politician. He says:

"I knew nothing about 'practical politics,' had never even voted except for Douglas; and during the whole period of my command I never did or wrote anything, or abstained from doing or writing anything, in view of its political effect upon myself. My ambition was fully gratified by my position of the command of the army, and, so long as I held that, nothing would have induced me to give it up for the Presidency. Whenever I wrote anything of a political nature, it was only with the hope of doing something towards the maintenance of those political principles which I honestly thought would control the conduct of the war. In fact, I sacrificed my own interests rather than acquiesce in what I thought wrong or impolitic. The President and his advisers made a great mistake in supposing that I desired political advancement."

Still further does he show that single-hearted desire to serve his country without personal ambition—or, with only a modest supply of it—in the letters to his wife. In one he writes:

"I receive letter after letter, have conversation after conversation; calling on me to save the nation, alluding to the Presidency, dictatorship, etc. As I hope one day to be united with you for ever in heaven, I have no such aspiration. I would cheerfully take the dictatorship, and

agree to lay down my life, when the country is saved. I am not spoiled by my unexpected new position. I feel sure that God will give me the strength and wisdom to preserve this great nation; but I tell you, who share all my thoughts, that I have no selfish feeling in this matter. I feel that God has placed a great work in my hands. I have not sought it. I know how weak I am, but I know that I mean to do right, and I believe that God will help me, and give me the wisdom I do not possess. Pray for me that I may be able to accomplish my task, the greatest, perhaps, that any poor, weak mortal ever had to do. God grant that I may bring this war to an end, and be permitted to spend the rest of my days quietly with you!"

This was not written, be it remembered, for the public eye, or with a view to effect, but in a simple communication to his own wife. And all through the private letters, of which many now see the light for the first time, we observe the same high-mindedness and strong religious sense of duty—not unmixed, however, with a considerable flavour of self-esteem.

Before going to Washington, McClellan had, as we have seen, cleared Western Virginia, and, in fact, that district seems to have been then the only part of the country in which military chaos did not reign. It was during this brief campaign that McClellan and Grant came near, the latter being eager to forsake tanning and to gain a post in the Army. McClellan does not say much about Grant, but this incident is worth repeating:

"I think it was during my absence on this very trip (to Indianapolis) that Grant came to Cincinnati to ask me, as an old acquaintance, to give him employment, or a place on my staff. Marcy or Seth Williams saw him, and told him that if he would await my return, doubtless I would do something for him; but before I got back, he was telegraphed that he could have a regiment in Illinois, and at once returned thither, so that I did not see him. This was his good luck, for had I been there I would no doubt have given him a place on my staff, and he would probably have remained with me and shared my fate."

The last allusion is to the persistent enmity with which McClellan was afterwards driven from the command, and subjected to humiliations, by the political intriguers. Grant was fortunate enough to

escape all that, and strong enough to follow his own plans and keep his own counsel. Hence his success where the other failed.

It was customary at this time to look upon the Secession as not a very strong movement, and as one that would be easily counteracted—in short, that the war would be brief, and the Union quickly restored. McClellan was, with Lincoln, among those who thought differently, who foresaw and tried to provide for the great and terrible task before the country. Some people say that but for the interference of the “politicians,” Lincoln and McClellan between them would have brought the war to an end by the middle of 1862. This, however, is hypothetical; but it is also certain that both Lincoln and McClellan had to fight two wars simultaneously—one with the Southerners, and the other with party politicians. In the latter, Lincoln won and McClellan lost. And before leaving this branch of the subject, let us show what the General himself thought of the organisation against him, and how he appraised the results:

“They committed a grave error in supposing me to be politically ambitious, and in thinking that I looked forward to military success as a means of reaching the Presidential chair. At the same time, they knew that if I achieved marked success, my influence would necessarily be very great throughout the country—an influence which I should certainly have used for the good of the whole country, and not for that of any party at the nation’s expense. They therefore determined to ruin me in any event and by any means: first by endeavouring to force me into premature movements, knowing that a failure would probably end my military career; afterwards, by withholding the means necessary to achieve success. That they were not honest is proved by the fact that, having failed to force me to advance at a time when an advance would have been madness, they withheld the means of success when I was in contact with the enemy, and finally relieved me from command when the game was in my hands. They determined that I should not succeed, and carried out their determinations only too well, and at a fearful sacrifice of blood, time, and treasure. In the East alone it is quite safe to say that we unnecessarily lost more than a quarter of a million in killed, wounded, and prisoners, in consequence of my being withdrawn from the Peninsula,

and not properly supported. Taking both East and West, and counting the losses also by disease, I do not doubt that more than half-a-million of men were sacrificed unnecessarily for the sake of securing the success of a political party.”

With the explanation that by “they” is chiefly meant Stanton and Chase, we gain a little more information from the following:

“Soon after Mr. Stanton became Secretary of War, it became clear that, without any reason known to me, our relations had completely changed. Instead of using his new position to assist me, he threw every obstacle in my way, and did all in his power to create difficulty and distrust between the President and myself. I soon found it impossible to gain access to him. Before he was in office, he constantly ran after me and professed the most ardent friendship; as soon as he became Secretary of War his whole manner changed, and I could no longer find the opportunity to transact even the ordinary current business of the office with him. It is now very clear to me that, far from being, as he had always represented himself to me, in direct and violent opposition to the Radicals, he was really in secret alliance with them, and that he and they were alike unwilling that I should be successful. No other theory can possibly account for his and their course, and on that theory everything becomes clear and easily explained.”

Of Lincoln, McClellan had a high opinion, and believed in his good faith towards himself. Not long before he died, indeed, McClellan told Mr. Rice (whose book about Lincoln we recently referred to*) that he sincerely believed that the President stood by him steadfastly, but that the influences at Washington had proved too strong even for him. In the Autobiography we find the following, among other references to Lincoln:

“Long before the war, when Vice-President of the Illinois Central Railway Company, I knew Mr. Lincoln, for he was one of the Council of the Company. More than once I had been with him in the out-of-the-way county-seats where some important case was being tried, and, in the lack of sleeping accommodations, have spent the night in front of a stove listening to the unceasing flow of anecdotes from his lips. He was never at a loss, and I could

* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, vol. xxxix., p. 470, “Abraham Lincoln.”

never quite make up my mind how many of them he had really heard before, and how many he invented on the spur of the moment. His stories were seldom refined, but were always to the point."

What McClellan had to do after completing the fortifications of the capital, and disposing in it sufficient forces for its defence, was to create an army. The word, even, was a new one in the experience of the American nation, and the people had very little idea what it meant. There were few soldiers in the country, and still fewer of them had grasped the realities and the potentialities of the situation. McClellan had thus both to educate public opinion and manufacture his army; and he was able to do the latter by reason of his experience in actual warfare, and his observation of the operations of great armies in the field in the Crimea.

"The Army of the Potomac," says Dr. Prime, "grew like a vast engine constructed by a master mind. Its history is the reward of the constructor, ample, and the only reward he ever received."

His soul was in his work, and his labour was enormous. Whether at Washington or in the field, he always personally watched the execution of important orders. In camp he seems to have been ubiquitous and sleepless, and soon the soldiers learned never to be surprised at seeing him anywhere at any time. It was doubtless this energy—this perpetual sharing of the dangers and labours of the campaigns—which endeared him so much to the men.

What, then, did McClellan do? He saved Washington, created the Army of the Potomac, and, when raised to the chief command, restored all the armies to order. He was the first to organise a definite plan of campaign; he despatched expeditions, which were successful, to North Carolina, New Orleans, and elsewhere; and he planned steadily towards the accomplishment of what eventually proved to be the master-stroke in the war—the taking of Richmond, albeit he was not suffered to take part in the final accomplishment of his plans. Indeed, when he left Washington, in 1862, at the head of his own army, with the object of striking a decisive blow at Richmond, he was attacked by his political enemies in the rear, and superseded in the command—or, rather, he was removed without a successor being at once appointed. Of course, his plans collapsed. Frustrated there, he formed a new plan,

and was advancing rapidly in pursuance of it, when again checked from Washington, and the Army of the Potomac was recalled.

The capital was once more in danger, for the Union forces had been defeated, and the Confederates were now marching on Washington. The intriguing politicians scuttled away to save their own precious bodies, and the President alone retained his calmness and judgement. He it was who begged McClellan to forget his wrongs and save the country. "Without one moment's hesitation," said McClellan, "and without making any conditions whatever, I at once said that I would accept the command, and would stake my life that I would save the city. Both the President and General Halleck asserted that it was impossible to save the city, and I repeated my firm conviction that I could and would save it. They then left, the President verbally placing me in entire command of the city, and of the troops falling back upon it from the front." McClellan set to work, collected his staff, despatched them with instructions to the different fortifications, and soon had all necessary preparations completed within the lines. Then he rode out to meet the retreating army, and the record of the meeting must not be omitted:

"It was after dark—I think there was moonlight—by the time I met the first troops, which were, I think, of Morell's Division, Fifth Corps; Porter had gone on a little while before to make arrangements for the bivouac of his troops. I was at once recognised by the men, upon which there was great cheering and excitement; but when I came to the Regular Division (Sykes), the scene was the most touching I had up to that time experienced. The cheers in front had attracted their attention, and I have been told since by many that the men at once pricked up their ears, and said it could only be for 'Little Mac.' As soon as I came to them the poor fellows broke through all restraints, rushed from the ranks and crowded around me, shouting, yelling, shedding tears, thanking God that they were with me again, and begging me to lead them back to battle. It was a wonderful scene, and proved that I had the hearts of these men."

He had also the esteem and respect of the enemy, it should be noted, as the following incident, relating to a somewhat later period, strikingly shows. McClellan tells it himself:

"I remember very well, when riding over the field of South Mountain that, passing by a severely wounded Confederate officer, I dismounted and spoke with him, asking whether I could do anything to relieve him. He was a Lieutenant-Colonel of a South Carolina regiment, and asked me if I was General McClellan; and when I said that I was General McClellan, he grasped my hand, and told me that he was perfectly willing to be wounded, and a prisoner, for the sake of taking by the hand one whom all the Confederates so honoured and admired. Such things happened to me not unfrequently, and I confess that it gave me no little pleasure to find that my antagonists shared the feelings of my own men for me."

We meet with many little narratives of this kind, but one must not judge them as if they were intentional parade for effect; McClellan, as we have said, was writing for his children—not for the public—and it was natural and proper that he should show them how their father was regarded by men. But it is right to add, that the General's statements with regard to the scenes just related are confirmed by other and independent testimony.

We speak now of the Federal Army as if it were a force of true-born American citizens of the Northern States. As a matter of fact, it was a perfect "*olla podrida*" of nationalities, such a mixture as has rarely if ever been seen in modern warfare. Here, for instance, is a description of the division commanded by General Blenker, when McClellan first went to Washington:

"The regiments were all foreign, and mostly Germans; but the most remarkable of all was the Garibaldi regiment. Its colonel, D'Utassy, was a Hungarian, and was said to have been a rider in Franconi's circus, and terminated his public American career in Albany Penitentiary. His men were from all known and unknown lands, from all possible and impossible armies: Zouaves from Algiers, men of the 'Foreign Legion,' Zephyrs, Cossacks, Garibaldians of the deepest dye, English deserters, Sepoys, Turcos, Croats, Swiss, beer-drinkers from Bavaria, stout men from North Germany, and no doubt Chinese, Esquimaux, and detachments from the army of the Grand Duchess of Gerolstein. Such a mixture was probably never before seen under any flag, unless, perhaps, in such bands as Holk's Jägers of the Thirty Years' War, or the Free Lances of the Middle Ages. I well remember that in returning

one night from beyond the picket-lines, I encountered an outpost of the Garibaldians. In reply to their challenge I tried English, French, Spanish, Italian, German, Indian, a little Russian and Turkish; all in vain, for nothing at my disposal made the slightest impression upon them, and I inferred that they were perhaps Gipsies, or Esquimaux, or Chinese!"

Whatever the components of the Army of the Potomac, however, they certainly knew and loved their General. He reorganised both it and the Army of Virginia; infused new courage into both officers and men; and marched off on the memorable flying campaign into Maryland, where were achieved his most brilliant victories.

Within two or three weeks after the retreat upon and panic in Washington, he had led back the troops and won the battles of South Mountain and Antietam. He did this, as he said himself, with "a halter round his neck," for he had only been given the command in Washington, and that verbally. When, long afterwards, asked why he had not asked for written orders, he replied, smiling: "It was no time for writing, and, in fact, I never thought of it."

His enemies did, however, and made the most of a breach of technical etiquette, for they feared the consequences to themselves of another great victory by McClellan. After Antietam, therefore, pressure was brought to bear on the President, and McClellan was ordered to transfer the command to General Burnside, and to go himself to Trenton, New Jersey, there to await orders. It was a terrible humiliation, but he bore it bravely. The effect on the army was striking, and we will give it in McClellan's own words:

"The order depriving me of the command created an immense deal of deep feeling in the army—so much so that many were in favour of my refusing to obey the order, and of marching upon Washington to take possession of the Government. My chief purpose in remaining with the army as long as I did after being relieved, was to calm this feeling, in which I succeeded. I will not attempt to describe my own feelings, nor the scenes attending my farewell to the army. They are beyond my powers of description. What words, in truth, could convey to the mind such a scene—thousands of brave men, who under my very eye had changed from raw recruits to veterans of many fields, shedding tears

like children in their ranks, as they bade good-bye to the General who had just led them to victory after the defeats they had seen under another leader? Could they have foreseen the future, their feelings would not have been less intense!"

And here ends "McClellan's Own Story," for his narrative ends with these words. The subsequent events in his career we must gather from other sources.

When he withdrew, as ordered, to Trenton, he held himself in readiness there should his services be needed. This was in November, 1862; but his services were not again requested. In 1864 the Democrats nominated him for the Presidency, and perhaps it was one of the greatest mistakes of his life to allow himself to be nominated. He accepted the nomination reluctantly, and did not expect to be elected, but one would have preferred to remember him as altogether apart from the political plotting and counter-plotting of those times. On the day of Lincoln's re-election in 1864, McClellan resigned his commission as Major-General in the Army of the United States, and endeavoured to find work of some kind as a civilian.

But even here, it is said, political enmity followed him, and prevented his obtaining a number of appointments he successively applied for. So, early in 1865, he went with his family to Europe, sorrowfully explaining to a friend: "I cannot find a place to earn my living here, and I am going to stay abroad till I am forgotten; then come back and find work, which I may get when these animosities are cooled down."

It is worth noting here that, while in Europe, General McClellan was for a time the guest of the Comte de Paris, who served under him during a portion of the war. The Comte has recently, in an article in an American Review, paid a high tribute, based on his personal knowledge and observation, to the fine qualities of McClellan as a soldier and a man.

The people of the United States did not forget McClellan during his long absence, and, indeed, that absence served only to make the hearts of his countrymen grow fonder. When he returned in 1868, soldiers and citizens alike combined to offer him a magnificent reception. He wrote, protesting in advance against any demonstration; but it was of no use, and he received what has been described as the most impressive ovation that has ever been given to a citizen of the American nation. For hour after hour a procession filed past

the balcony in which he was seated while an enthusiastic crowd thronged the streets, and added to the chorus of cheers and congratulations.

This was in 1868. Then he built a house at Maywood, in New Jersey, and settled there among his friends. Nine years later he was elected Governor of the State of New Jersey, and proved a successful and popular administrator, eminently just and free from partisanship. He was glad, however, when his term of office expired, and then he went abroad again and travelled through Europe to Egypt and the Holy Land. Having a wonderful knowledge of languages, he was at home in all countries. He was, moreover, a highly-cultured man, and "a general student of the literature of the world."

He kept pace with the progress of thought and discussion in history, philosophy, and art; he delighted in archaeological studies, and in following the work of geographical explorers. His own literary gifts were not inconsiderable, and he was master of a clear and nervous style of composition. Always full of occupation of one kind or another, he was yet devoted to his family. His wife and children were his constant companions.

Of his religion, his friend Dr. Prime tells us that it was "deep, earnest, practical; not vague or ill-defined to himself or others, not obtrusive, but outspoken when required, frank and hearty. . . . In all his life, public and private, every purpose was formed, every act done, in the light of that faith. It was this which not only produced in him that stainless purity of walk and conversation which all who knew him recognised, but also gave him strength for all the great works of a great life. It was this which created that magnetic power so often spoken of, won to him that marvellous devotion of his soldiers, made all who knew him regard him with affection, those who knew him best love him most."

General McClellan died of heart disease in the autumn of 1885. In accordance with his strict injunctions, the funeral was a private one, but immense crowds thronged the streets, and respectfully and sorrowfully saluted the body of the much-abused soldier on its way to its last resting-place. He was buried at Trenton, New Jersey, the very place to which the cruel order of the Executive had consigned him, when removing him finally from the command of the army which he had made and led to victory.

CELESTIAL PHOTOGRAPHY.

How few, when they assume their most graceful attitudes and put on their best looks in front of the photographer's camera, remember that the light, which is to portray their features, left the sun some minutes before they took their place, and that the light which, at that very instant, is starting from the sun, will not arrive until several minutes after the operation is over.

Still fewer know that, by the same wonderful agency of light which issued from its source before they were born, are revealed the existence and the whereabouts of heavenly bodies invisible to the human eye, even when assisted by the most perfected telescopes. Yet this is what is being done just now.

In this year's "Annuaire of the Bureau des Longitudes," M. le Contre-Amiral E. Mouchez, Director of the Paris Observatory—as well known to astronomers and others for his courtesy as for his scientific attainments—has a remarkable article, entitled "La Photographie Astronomique," in which he informs us that, during the last two years, considerable progress has been effected in the application of photography to the study of the heavens. For the future advance of astronomy and the increase of our knowledge of the universe, its importance can hardly be overrated.

Messieurs Paul and Prosper Henry, able astronomers and learned opticians, by apparatus of their own construction, have obtained results which far surpass anything yet done in stellar photography. They have thus demonstrated the possibility of easily completing, in a few years, and with the help of a dozen observatories suitably distributed over the surface of the globe, a complete map of the celestial vault, comprising not only the five or six thousand stars visible by the naked eye, but also the millions of stars, down to the very faintest, which are visible only with the most powerful instruments. It is a gigantic enterprise, which would hardly have been dreamt of a few years ago.

This Map will consist of the eighteen hundred or two thousand sheets necessary to represent, on a sufficiently large scale, the forty-two thousand square degrees comprised in the surface of the sphere, besides giving separately, on a more extended scale, all groups of stars or other objects which present a special interest. It will

thus bequeath to future ages the state of the heavens at the close of the nineteenth century, with absolute authenticity and exactitude. The comparison of this Map with those which may be made at more and more distant epochs, will enable future astronomers to detect and to prove numerous changes of position and magnitude that are now merely suspected, or even measured, for only quite a small number of stars—from which will most certainly result many an unexpected fact and many an important discovery.

Up to the beginning of the present century Astronomy had scarcely more extended aims than the study of our Solar System and the laws which regulate its movements. Its attention was naturally directed to those heavenly bodies which were nearest to us, which were the easiest to become acquainted with, and which offered to the human race the most immediate interest. The rapidity and wide extent of their movements also allowed observations of their positions sufficiently exact to ascertain the diverse conditions of their course round the sun, and, consequently, the laws of universal attraction, although the instruments then available were of but moderate precision and power.

But the case was different for stars which are called in common parlance "fixed." The extreme slowness of their apparent movement in space—when it could be discovered at all—their prodigious distance, compared with the brevity of human life; and the minuteness of our measurements, even when taken from different points of our Solar System; required instruments of great power and observations of the utmost delicacy, to make it possible to prove that those stars had undergone a slight change of place within the narrow span of an astronomer's life.

Moreover, Catalogues or Maps, comprising only several millions of stars, demanded many years of assiduous labour whose perfect exactitude could not be guaranteed, and in spite of the zeal and perseverance displayed by astronomers devoted to this line of research—so fatiguing from its monotony—they could never attain, by such insufficient processes, the knowledge of more than a very small portion of the heavens.

The most laborious as well as the most thankless branch of astronomical observations, and that which absorbs the greatest

share of work in the leading observatories—consists in the exact determination of the position of the stars in what might be called the Geography of the Sky. The only object of this enormous labour is to study the laws of the stellar movements. It was especially the hope of aiding those discoveries which led to the construction of grand Catalogues of the Stars, like those of Piazzi, Lalande, and others. In future, photography will undertake the ungrateful task, with marvellous precision and rapidity.

Science had already been able to establish, both by observation and analogy, that there does not exist in the universe a single body that is motionless; and this axiom is of more world-wide importance than at first sight appears. But Science has hitherto been unable to ascertain, with some degree of certitude, the movements of more than a very restricted number of stars, while the movement of our sun himself through space is as yet only very imperfectly known.

Admiral Mouchez conscientiously recapitulates the progress hitherto made by astronomical photography, which can only be briefly glanced at here. The Observatory of Harvard College was the first to obtain good photographs of stars, and to show with what remarkable precision they supplied the measurement of their relative positions. In 1856, Mr. De la Rue built a special Observatory at Cranford, furnished with a Newtonian telescope, whose mirror he had himself constructed. In the following year, this instrument gave him good images of the Moon in nine or ten seconds, of Jupiter in twelve seconds, of Saturn in one minute, and of several bright stars in two or three minutes.

But a great point was to obtain a stereoscopic view of a heavenly body; to behold its surface in solid relief, as if it were actually suspended before the eye. De la Rue succeeded in this. By taking two images of the Moon at a suitable interval, he produced stereoscopic views which show, in perfect relief, all the ups and downs of our satellite's surface. The same result was obtained with the Sun and Jupiter. But as the Moon always presents the same face to our view, the stereoscopic effect was realised by taking advantage of the slight changes produced on her face by libration. As to Jupiter, the two views required were taken at an interval of twenty-six minutes, during which time the planet's rapid rotation gave a change of aspect sufficient to produce the stereoscopic effect.

MM. Henry were led to apply photography to star-mapping by the almost insuperable difficulties presented by the ordinary methods. They had undertaken to continue and complete the Ecliptic Map, begun by Chacornac, and left unfinished at his death in 1873. This Ecliptic Map was intended to represent all the stars, down to the thirteenth and the fourteenth magnitude, which lie within a zone, five degrees broad, on each side of the ecliptic. Its great utility would be to facilitate the discovery of asteroids or minor planets, principally circulating within that zone. Every sheet of this Map contains on an average from fifteen to eighteen hundred stars. Sixty sheets are already finished.

In the course of their labours at this herculean task, they came upon regions of the sky where the stars were so numerous as to compel them to simplify the usual methods, to avoid too great a loss of time. But soon afterwards, as they approached the Milky Way, the groups of stars became so crowded that they were absolutely bewildered amongst them, even with the help of their perfected methods. It was then that they had recourse to photography, thereby making the stars register their own positions.

The plates so obtained, examined by the microscope, are most interesting from several points of view. The aspect of the images of stars is so characteristic that it is not possible to mistake them for accidental stains. The stars appear, in fact, not in the simple form of a single uniform round black spot, diminishing in size and growing lighter in tint in proportion as the star is fainter, but like a collection or group of little black points, very crowded in the centre with stars of the first ten or twelve magnitudes, and more widely scattered, but still quite as black, for the fainter stars; and, at the extreme limit of visibility, beyond the last stars which give a certain and decided image, the plates show several small groups of minute black dots, still more wide apart, evidently revealing the existence of yet feebler stars, which, however, can only be suspected, but cannot be confirmed by any other proof.

Unfortunately, whatever progress may be accomplished in optics or in photography; however great sensibility or penetrating power we may hope to give to our instruments; it is evident that we shall never obtain a sight of the very last and most distant stars. Whatever limits we may succeed in

reaching, there will always remain beyond those limits, an infinity of other stars, lost to us in the profundity of the heavens, which will ever escape our cognisance. Still, it is certainly by means of photography and the microscopic study of the plates it gives us, that we shall reach the most distant possible limit.

At present, at the Paris Observatory, MM. Henry readily obtain, in an hour, plates of six or seven superficial degrees, on which are reproduced, with extreme brightness and purity, and without sensible deformity of shape, every star, down to the sixteenth magnitude; that is, beyond the visibility attained by the best refracting telescopes under the sky of Paris. They have even obtained many stars of the seventeenth magnitude, which, as already stated, and as far as we know, have never yet been seen by mortal eye.

And besides stars, they sometimes also discover on the plates, objects invisible by the most powerful instruments. Such is the nebula of Maia, in the Pleiades, which shows itself like a very brilliant comet's tail starting from the star, and which had never before been signalised, although the group of the Pleiades is one of the best studied constellations in our northern sky. Mr. E. Pickering had already noticed it thirteen days before MM. Henry; but he attributed it to a defect in the plate, until informed of their discovery. Neptune's satellite, always invisible at Paris, has also been photographed throughout every portion of its orbit, even at its nearest approach to the planet.

Photography, it is confidently expected, will not only enable a complete map of the heavens to be made, but will also aid the study of double and multiple stars, as well as the search after unknown stars. We may also hope to discover amongst them relative movements of the highest interest; for instance, in globular masses and agglomerations of stars, like the marvellous cluster in Hercules. On the plate, with unassisted sight, it appears nothing more than a small diffuse spot, two or three millimètres in diameter—a millimètre is the twenty-fifth part of an inch—but, examined with a good lens, it is seen to contain several hundreds of stars, little differing from each other in magnitude, perfectly defined, surrounding an apparently irreducible nucleus, which nevertheless, it may be taken for granted, contains a still greater number of stars.

By direct observation, no measurement

is possible, even by the very best instruments. The eye is dazzled by what looks like a mass of innumerable grains of brilliant dust, which no astronomer has ever attempted to map; whereas, under the microscope, the plate will give their measurements with not less precision than facility. No rich display of earthly gems, no artistic illuminations by terrestrial fires, can rival that seeming handful of glittering spangles, each particle of which is a sun; each sun, doubtless, attended by an offspring of planets and their attendant satellites.

It is impossible that such a wonderful condensation of stars can be either an effect of perspective or a result of chance. It seems evident, therefore, that they must be held together by some interstellar influence, some law of unity, which not only caused their original assembling, but still maintains their association throughout the lapse of ages. Were it otherwise, their own proper independent motions, acting ever since the world began, would long ago have dispersed them throughout the heavens. Exactly the contrary has happened. Though infinitely more numerous than the swarm of gnats which dances in the wintry sunshine, they yet, like them, are held together by an invisible bond of fellowship.

Of course, we are unable to conceive the laws which govern these enormous groups of stars, which often seem no more than faint nebulae, more or less rounded in form. As yet, it has only been possible to be aware of their existence. Photography, perhaps, will permit us to ascertain some general law in their motions, if such exist—whether, for example, as is already believed, the plane of their orbits be not far from coinciding with a common equator—which would be a most remarkable fact, if proved. But by transmitting to posterity faithful images of those groups of stars which are susceptible of such treatment, we shall afford our descendants the possibility of discovering important secrets in their organisation, whose complexity must be infinitely greater than anything we are aware of in our Solar System.

The above are only a few scanty hints of the immense scope embraced by Celestial Photography; but they suffice to show that amateur astronomers and photographers—indeed, everyone who takes an interest in physical science—will be well repaid by a careful perusal of Admiral Mouchez's clear, concise, and comprehensive paper.

THE PRIBYLOV ISLANDS.

WHEN reporting some time ago on the animal life of the Pribylov Islands, my account was confined solely to the seal, as being the one chief object of attention on the spot. It naturally overshadows every other production of the sea; being, in fact, the sufficing reason for the existence of the islands and their inhabitants. But it must not be supposed that this is the only form of animal life. There are other strange creatures which, though worthless, or nearly so, to beings in a high state of civilisation, are yet of the greatest importance to the semi-civilised natives, who turn every particle to account in a way incomprehensible to more favoured people.

We will begin with the sea lion (*Eumetopias Stelleri*), which may be studied to better advantage in the Pribylov Islands than anywhere else in the world.

In the first place, it is twice the size and weight of his cousin the fur seal, averaging ten to twelve feet in length, with a girth of eight to nine feet round the chest and shoulders, and a weight of twelve hundred pounds. By its physical organisation it is able to adapt itself to all conditions of climate, being equally at home in Behring's Sea, or on the well-known rocks at the entrance of the harbour of San Francisco, which every visitor goes to see. The proprietor of Woodward's Gardens in the latter city made up his mind years ago that the fur seal was no good to a showman—it drooped and pined as soon as it got into the tank, and its death was only a question of a week or two—whilst the sea lion, he asserted, might be taken to New Orleans or to Boston without being affected in the slightest degree. Again, it cannot progress on land like its smaller relative, which under favourable conditions can be driven five miles in twenty-four hours; the sea lion, however, could never manage more than two. It is really ridiculous to see the huge erect creature balancing and swinging its long, heavy neck as a lever, bringing up its hind quarters, which hardly ever leave the ground, in an utterly painful way. It is polygamous, but does not maintain any system or regularity such as obtains among the fur seals, and is the distinguishing characteristic of the rookeries. It never hauls up more than a few rods from the water under any circumstances, and is so shy and suspicious that its habits cannot be noticed unless the

greatest care be taken to utilise all advantages of wind and silence. It is the most timid and cowardly of all creatures; the merest approach is enough to drive a whole herd into the sea, and a boy with a rattle or a pop-gun could do it, and keep them there for the whole season. The female is not quite half the size of the male; she will be eight to nine feet long, and weigh four to five hundred pounds. She has the same general cast of feature and build, but is never so fat as her master, as she, like the fur seal, has no occasion to fast, but comes and goes as she likes. There will be found ten to fifteen to each male; the young are produced soon after landing, and at once begin to look about, paddle in the surf, and roar in imitation of their parents. They are fed with the richest of milk at long and irregular intervals, but, as with the other amphibians, they thrive wonderfully; for from nine to twelve pounds at birth, it reaches seventy-five to ninety pounds in less than four months. By this time it has shed its first coat and teeth, and has become at home in the water, where it was clumsy enough at first, though never so helpless as the fur seal.

To us the sea lion is of no importance, for he has no fur, and is consequently of little or no value. To the native, however, he is invaluable for his skin, flesh, fat, and sinews. His capture is the only serious business they have at St. Paul. It requires great care and diligence, and is not unaccompanied with some physical risk. This is how they set about it.

By the end of September, when the seal rookeries have broken up, and all real business is at an end, fifteen or twenty of the best men are selected by the chief. They take their provisions and make themselves at home in certain huts near the sea lion resting-places, prepared if necessary to stop a month, till they get their quota of two hundred to three hundred. The creatures cannot be approached by day, so a moonlight night, with plenty of clouds, is always chosen. The natives sally forth in Indian file, preserving the most discreet silence, and crawl on all-fours between the sea and the sleeping herd. Then at a signal, all at once jumping up, make the most diabolical row with shouts, screams, and pistol shots. The huge brutes suddenly awake in the utmost consternation; those whose heads are turned to the sea at once make for it, and are lost for this night; those whose heads are directed the other

way, rush straight ahead inland ; a hundred yards, however, are enough for them, and they sink down panting and breathless. They are allowed to recover, and are then driven very slowly and quietly on towards the huts where their captors have been keeping watch. This is a very long process, but it comes to an end at last, and the thirty or forty huge brutes (for they never get more at once) are penned till the day of slaughter. This is the proper expression to use ; but we must throw away every preconceived idea derived from farm-yards or cattle markets. To form a sea lion pen, it is only necessary to stick stakes in the ground in a circle ten to thirty feet apart, to embrace them with a line or two of sinew rope, and hang on calico strips, which may flutter in the wind. There you have a sea lion pen, as absurdly comical a thing as any to be found in all the wide world. In this primitive prison the brutes are kept nine or ten days and nights, and, although they never make the slightest effort to get out, it must not be supposed that they are paralysed and quiescent ; on the contrary, like all the race, they are ever on the alert, wakeful, writhing, twisting and turning one over the other, without a moment's pause. Suppose then, that after several nights, the full complement of two to three hundred is obtained, the next job is to drive them to the killing ground eleven miles off. This, of course, is a work of time, and may take three weeks, if the weather is unfavourable. The young ones and the females being lighter, go ahead and induce the bulls to follow, but every now and then some of the latter give in and sink breathless. Time has then to be given them to recover, and then they are urged on again, nothing being found so efficacious as the opening and shutting of the gingham of civilisation in the face of an old bull. To make short work of the matter, let us now suppose the creatures arrived at last at their destination. The males are shot down, and the others speared.

Now what do the natives do with them ? Well, they are utilised to the utmost. The flesh is eaten ; the skin serves to cover boats ; the intestines are blown out, then dried, then cut in ribbons and sewn strongly with the sinews to form an admirably waterproof garment, known as the Kamlaika, which is fully as impervious to wet as india-rubber, and has the advantage of being far stronger, and at the same time unaffected by grease or oil.

The throats are treated in the same way, and are used for boot tops, whose soles are made from the hide. The stomach does duty as a receptacle for the oil procured from its former owner, which, unlike that of the fur seal, boils out clear and inodorous. The bristles of the moustache are exported to San Francisco, where they are highly prized by John Chinaman, who uses them as pickers for his opium pipe, and for various ceremonies in his joss house. The entire carcase thus gets utilised ; hung up in the open it keeps more or less well, chiefly the latter ; not that that matters much, for the natives have a decided predilection for meat in that state which is known to us as "high." So much for the sea lion.

Now comes a very early acquaintance of ours, the walrus, that queer monster which has been familiar to all of us since childhood from pictures. Everybody can at once call it up to remembrance by the feature which distinguishes it from all others, the two enormous tusks projecting straight down from its upper jaw. Many of us, even naturalists, may think we know all about it, and so thought Mr. Elliott. He had read everything that had appeared in print since Olaus Magnus, in 1555, and fancied he could learn nothing new, or at any rate, interesting to science. What, then, were his feelings when he saw a walrus for the first time ? It was a new creature, a new species, or all that had been written about its Atlantic cousin was erroneous. The natives were eagerly questioned : "Is this walrus sick ?" "No, it isn't. "Do they always look like that ?" "Just the same," was the reply. It is, in fact, a distinct and separate animal specifically from its congener of the North Atlantic. It is a melancholy fact, but none the less true, that the walrus, as seen here, is one of the most disgusting-looking objects known to man. It has a raw, naked hide, without hair or fur, covered with a multitude of pustular-looking warts, boils, and pimples, the skin wrinkled in deep, flabby folds, and marked by dark venous lines, which show clearly through the yellowish-brown cuticle which seems to be peeling off with leprosy, altogether a most unwholesome-looking brute, unpleasantly suggesting the appearance we know as "bloated."

They are of tremendous size, ten feet and a half to twelve feet long, and weighing fifteen or sixteen hundred pounds. In water, their motions are not nearly so quiet or graceful as those of the seal and

sea lion, and on land they are almost helpless, for which reason they rarely come outside the surf-wash. They go about in large herds, which now and then emerge to sleep. First one lands and lays itself out, and then a second comes and gives its predecessor a shove, whereupon he moves a little further up; then comes number three who pokes up number two, who prods number one, and so on till the whole herd has got to land; each brute pillowed on the body of the one above him, all without quarrelling, but every movement displaying apathy and phlegm. Its most extraordinary feature is its hide, which over the shoulders and down the throat and chest is three inches thick, and is nowhere less than half-an-inch. It feeds exclusively on shell fish, and the bulbous roots and tender stalks of certain marine plants, which grow abundantly at the bottom of the bays and lagoons of the Alaskan coast; and it is evidently for digging up these that it uses its tusks, and not, as is reported, for the purpose of hauling itself upon ice or rock. Another blow to received opinion is given by Mr. Elliott's testimony as to the cowardice of the brutes. They will snort or blow to any extent in the water, but as to attacking a boat, that is the very last thing that would enter into their heads. It is unfortunate that no females were to be found about the islands. The natives say that the creature is monogamous; that the female brings forth a single calf in June, usually on the ice floes north of Behring's Straits; that it resembles its parents in general character when six weeks old, but that its tusks do not appear till the second year; and that the mother is strongly attached to it and nurses it later in the season in the sea.

The species has a wide range in these latitudes, north of the Aleutian chain, and is hunted on the mainland for its hide and ivory. The former, shaved down considerably, serves to cover boats, whose wooden, whalebone-lashed frame, thus protected, can stand more thumping and pounding against rocks and alongside ship, than any lighter known to seamen. The skin, too, at one time served a purpose that no one would ever dream of, and thus it came about.

In the time of the Russian dominion it was used to cover the packages of furs sent from Sitka to Kiachta in China, the great frontier trading place. It was then stripped off and sewed again over the chests of tea which were received in exchange, and thus found its way to Moscow. There the

soundest portions were finally cut up, and stamped as "Kopecks," a variety of small change, and thus found its way back again to its original home as circulating medium. This sort of currency was long known to the country, and in fact the natives never saw gold and silver coins till the Americans took them there in 1868.

Another use is for harness, for which it is admirably adapted; but, remember, only so long as the weather is cold and dry. If you are caught in a storm the horses will go on and leave you nobody knows how far behind, the traces remaining unbroken, but stretching like so much india-rubber.

The flesh is in great demand among the Eskimos, who live on it and supply all their wants from the carcase, just as the South Sea Islanders do from the palm tree. To the civilised palate the meat is the most abominable known. Even the natives of St. Paul and St. George, who are not fastidious, will not touch it.

There yet remains another animal to be mentioned, one which everybody thinks of in connection with icy regions, known to all of us, by repute at least, and the representative animal of the North Pole—the polar bear; not that they are found so low down as the Pribylovs. There are legends of the brute having been killed there, but that is a long time ago, and it must have been an accidental visitor, carried down, most probably, on an ice floe, for the bear cannot stand the high temperature which is so favourable to the seal. To find it at home we must go two hundred miles north of St. Paul to St. Matthew Island, a spot untrodden by human foot since 1810-11, when five Russians and seven Aleuts spent the winter there, and were so stricken with scurvy that all the Russians but one died, and the rest barely recovered, and left early next year. A sad, dreary, inhospitable place is this, but abounding in walrus, thus giving the bear more of his natural food than he knows what to do with. Mr. Elliott and Lieutenant Maynard, U.S.N., landed there in August, and walked over the whole coast-line for the purpose of making a survey. They were prepared from old Russian accounts to find bears—but not hundreds of them, as was the case. They were on the island nine days, and during every instant of daylight were never out of sight of a bear or bears. Dangerous neighbours, you will say. Not a bit of it; they are more afraid of you than you of them. Their sole idea,

old and young, males, females, and cubs, was to get out of the way. Whether they were gorged with food, or the heat made them quiet, it is impossible to say, but the fact is that not one could be induced to show fight. Half-a-dozen were shot, but it was found that they were at the height of the moulting season, and the fur came off in handfuls at the least rub. They never roared or uttered the slightest sound, even when wounded. Their bulk is enormous; one measured eight feet from tip of nose to its excessively short tail, and must have weighed one thousand or twelve hundred pounds. It had a girth of twenty-four inches round the muscles of the forearm, just at the place which corresponds to our wrist. If anyone wants a new excitement in these days of travel, let him find his way to St. Matthew and spend the winter there. He can get any number of skins in the highest state of perfection, and will have no lack of meat, and we are assured that of all meats known to humanity polar bear steak is the finest.

After this little excursion we can return again to the Pribylovs.

It must not be supposed that in St. Paul time hangs heavily on one's hands; to think so is the greatest mistake. Any one of education and intelligence, and with a disposition to accept his situation and make the best of it, will find plenty to occupy him in observing, recording, and reflecting on the peculiarities of the enormous quantity of life always present during the summer. Enormous, be it understood, outside the amphibians with which, up to now, we have been more particularly concerned. Everyone will anticipate what I am going to mention. The birds are here in millions upon millions, nay, hundreds of millions, and the dreary expanses and lonely solitudes of the North owe their chief enlivenment, and their principal attraction to man, to the vast flocks of water-fowl which repair here annually for the breeding season. In importance they are naturally overshadowed by the mammalia, but to the naturalist and to many who lay no claim to be experts, the habits, character, and description of the numerous species will always be attractive. Here, then, I have a brief notice of the visitors. I give the scientific names as well as the popular for the benefit of the few who may be ornithologists. The latter vary so much according to the locality, that they are often misleading; this cannot occur with the former.

In the first place, fifteen miles of the bold basaltic bluff line of St. George are fairly covered with nesting gulls (*Rissa*), and "arries" (*Uria*), while down in the countless chinks and crannies over the entire surface of the north side of the island, millions of "choochkies" (*Simorhynchus pusillus*) breed, filling the air and darkening the light of day with their cries and fluttering forms. On Walrus Islet the nests of the great white gull of the North (*Larus glaucus*), can be inspected, as well as those of the sea parrot or puffin (*Fratercula* sp.), cormorants (*Graculus* sp.), and the red-legged kittiwake (*Larus brevirostris*). All these can be reached without much difficulty, and afford unequalled opportunities for taking notes during the breeding season, which lasts from early May to end of September. Each and all afford the natives a delightful change from the everlasting seal meat; even the cormorant, rankest of all birds, is a dainty, and all the more appreciated, that it is the only bird which never leaves, even in winter, and thus affords a supply of fresh meat for soups and stews, always wanted by the sick. But the time when the heart of the Aleut swells within him is in July, when he can put his hand on the bluish green, dark brown mottled egg of the "arrie," the thick-billed guillemot. This is one of the most palatable of those found here, being, when fresh, practically equal to our hen's egg, and having no disagreeable flavour whatever. One can form an idea of their plenty from the fact that on one visit six men loaded a boat capable of carrying four tons, beside crew, down to the water's edge with eggs in less than three hours. Good as these are, they are yet surpassed by the eggs of the Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis*), which equal those of our duck, although, strange to say, the bird itself is the most disgusting to eat of any, except the cormorant. These birds lay in the most inaccessible places, and the only way of getting them is to hang suspended by a raw-hide rope some hundred feet below the cliff and some hundred feet above the water. One of the natives met his death in the following curious way: He had been successful in securing a large basket of the first eggs of the season, and, anxious to go on, he sent his wife back to the village with his take and swung himself down as before. Nobody thus being at the top, a hungry fox which had been looking on, now ran to the rope and began gnawing it; in a second or two it parted, and the poor fellow was dashed to pieces

on the rocks below. It was afterwards found that some time that morning he had rubbed his yolk-smeared hands on the raw hide, and it was just at that place that the fox gnawed it.

In winter all are absent but the cor-morant and a few burgomaster gulls (*Larus glaucus*); but as soon as May opens, the sky is clouded by the millions of arrivals. The face of the cliffs is at once occupied by the "arrie," which lays a single egg on the bare rock, and stands, just like a champagne bottle, straddling over it while hatching. Hundreds of thousands of these birds are thus engaged, packed as close as sardines in a box, each individual uttering an incessant, deep, low, hoarse grunt. The adaptation of Nature to this primitive nesting is very conspicuous. The shell is so tough, that the natives, when collecting, chuck them about as we do potatoes, fill a sack, and then tip it with the customary jerk into the heap, just as we should treat the tuber, and with almost as little damage, very few being crushed or broken.

But the most characteristic bird of the islands is the "choochkie," the knot-billed auk (*Simiorhynchus pusillus*), a little creature three inches long and two inches wide, which comes every year by the million. It is comically indifferent to the presence of man, and will let you get within arm's length, sitting squatted upright, and eyeing you with a peculiar look of mingled wisdom and astonishment. It is one of the sights of St. George to see the morning flight to the sea, and the evening return. Its egg is extraordinarily large, being half as long as itself, and more than half its own width.

The thick-billed guillemot (*Lomvia arra*) is another which appears in countless multitudes. This is in bodily size the exact counterpart of our common duck, except that it cannot walk, or even waddle, as our domestic bird. In morals, too, it is distinctly inferior, for it is always quarrelling with its own species; and not merely by scolding: prompt action is its characteristic. During the breeding season, one may walk over hundreds of these birds which have fallen and dashed themselves to pieces on the rocks, while engaged in deadly combat with their rivals. They seize one another in mid-air, and hold on with their strong mandibles so savagely, that they are blinded to their peril, and strike the earth before they realise their danger.

One of the most extraordinary sights

that can be seen here is afforded by a peculiar habit they have of encircling St. George, which gives us some sort of idea of their excessive number. While the females are sitting, at regular hours in the morning and evening the males go flying round and round the island in great files and platoons, always circling against or quartering on the wind; and during several consecutive hours they form a dark girdle of birds more than a quarter of a mile wide and thirty miles long, flying so thickly together that the wings of one fairly strike against those of the other.

And with this astounding sight we bid farewell to the Pribylovs.

FATE, OR CHANCE?

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER II.

MANY years later, Nelly Dawson, now a middle-aged woman, was sitting one afternoon in her bed-room, turning out an old desk in which she kept her letters. One neatly-tied packet was Mabel Garne's contribution towards the store. Nelly undid the tape, and leisurely went through the correspondence of years. Girlish, romantic effusions, the earlier letters were; the later, more practical and serious. One, written straight from a glowing, happy heart, told the news of her engagement to Captain Lawrence. All had come right, after all; a fortunate chance of explanation had put things straight, and she was the happiest and luckiest girl in the whole world; she was frightened, herself, at her own happiness. The wedding was to take place very soon, and Nelly, of course, must be one of the bridesmaids.

The date of this letter was sixteen years back, and Nelly went off into a brown study over all that had happened since it was written.

She opened another, bearing the Dublin post-mark. It told the news of the death of a little daughter—the only child—and was heartrending in its grief and despair.

Later letters bore the Indian post-mark, and Mabel had now been in India many years.

Nelly fancied that in these she could trace, "between the lines," an undercurrent of bitter feeling and disillusionment. Major Lawrence's name was rarely mentioned, and this omission looked ominous. Poor Mabel! hers was not the temperament to

bear the rubs and frets of life with fortitude; all emotion with her was intensified: happiness was ecstasy; grief, hopeless despair.

Nelly, who had never once seen her old friend since her marriage, often wondered how things were with her, and often thought of her with tender and pitying affection.

She took up another letter. In it, Mabel wrote at length about the strange vision she had seen at the old Manor House. She noted every detail with extreme precision, and asked Nelly to take special care of this description, in case any future event might prove it to have been a warning. At the same time, she begged her friend never to refer to it; she, herself, had determined to try to banish it entirely from her memory.

Looking up from the faded page, Nelly saw a man walking up the avenue. As he came nearer, she could distinguish the local postman with the afternoon letters. Presently her maid knocked at the door and brought them to her; one—a thin, Indian letter—was in Mabel Lawrence's writing!

"What a strange coincidence, just as I was thinking of her!" she said to herself as she opened the envelope.

This was what she read:

"DEAREST NELLY,

"I have for some time past had a very great trouble on my mind, but I did not dare to speak of it to anyone. What I have gone through in keeping it to myself, I could never tell. You will be shocked, dear, to hear of it, and I have so little time in writing before the mail leaves, that I must break it abruptly. My worst fears are true. I am suffering from cancer, and I am coming at once to London to undergo the operation that alone can save my life. A few days after you receive this letter I shall be in town. Rooms will be taken for me in Brook Street, where the operation will be performed.

"Nelly, my dear old friend, do, for Heaven's sake, give me the comfort of your presence.

"Let me have your kind face to look at. Do, pray, pray, come to me. But I know you will not refuse me. I know your kind heart so well.

"My husband cannot leave; I travel with my maid. I will telegraph the address directly I arrive. You will come, won't you?—for the sake of old times.

"Your affectionate friend,

"MABEL."

A deadly foreboding struck, like the chill of an icy hand, to Nelly's heart as she read.

When she was calm enough, she went downstairs to tell the sad news to her sister—their mother had been dead some years—and to make arrangements for going to London.

A week later she was driving up to Brook Street.

She was shown upstairs to the drawing-room. Mabel was lying on the sofa, dozing.

The opening of the door roused her, and, with a cry of mingled delight, love, and anguish, she sprang up, and, flinging her arms round her old friend's neck, sobbed convulsively for some minutes without speaking.

Then she drew Nelly down beside her on to the sofa, and the two women looked at each other with a long, loving, searching glance.

Nelly, living a calm, monotonous, eventless country life, had altered comparatively little. She had grown stouter, and her fresh colour had deepened; but she had never altered the style of her hair, had never changed the style of her dress, and, looking at her, it seemed impossible to Mabel to realise that fifteen years had passed away since they last met.

Nelly, on her part, was shocked beyond description at the change in Mabel. Her face was yellow, thin, worn, and lined; her eyes dull and despairing. She stooped, and her hair was streaked with grey. Mental suffering and the Indian climate had aged her, till she looked at least ten years older than she really was. She seemed to read the thoughts passing through Nelly's mind.

"Yes, I am terribly altered, Nell," she said presently, with a smile more sad and pathetic than any tears. "You look just the same fat, comfortable, dear old thing—you don't look a day older. Kiss me again, dear. Heaven bless you! I knew you would come to me."

"Yes; and I will stay with you as long as you want me, poor darling."

They sat for some time silent, grasping each other's hands.

Nelly's presence seemed to have the old soothing effect upon her unfortunate friend, who was able presently to speak of her trouble, and to talk over the arrangements that had been made.

The operation would take place in four days. One of the first London surgeons had undertaken the case; a physician and

nurse would be in attendance also. All she begged Nelly to do, was to be with her on the day, to remain in the room while the chloroform was administered, and to let hers be the first face she should see when consciousness returned.

"But sometimes I think I shall not wake up again. Once or twice I have had a strong feeling that I shall die under the chloroform."

Nelly tried to reason away the gloomy fears that came so thickly into the poor woman's distracted and terror-stricken mind; and her cheering words and presence certainly worked wonders.

The physician, on calling the next morning, was surprised and pleased at his patient's improved appearance and calmer manner. He recommended a drive in an open carriage, and they went round the Park. The sight of the old familiar spots, so unchanged, touched Mabel inexpressibly. She pointed out, with tears in her eyes, one particular tree under which she had met Alfred, just when she thought everything was over.

Poor woman! Her eyes got feverishly bright; her cheeks flushed with the excitement of living over again the sweet old time of youth, and love, and hope!

"Oh, how happy I was then! how happy I was that day!" she exclaimed. "I knew, the moment he took my hand in his, and looked in my eyes, that he loved me still. To-day, I am like a ghost visiting the haunts of my former life—for all the old things are passed away, Nell," she added, with inexpressible sadness.

Nelly had not ventured to ask her one question about her married life, and she had not once, till this moment, spoken of her husband.

It was evident there was some unhappy estrangement.

The next evening, when they were sitting together in the twilight, the story came out.

Major Lawrence for a long time had neglected his wife, had long ceased to care for her. He was carrying on an unlimited flirtation with a girl who had lately gone out, and who had "made a dead set" at him in the most deliberate fashion. It was the talk of the station.

"If I die, Nell, he will marry her. I want to live so, Nell; not that life holds any possible happiness for me, but to keep her from him. If it were not for that, I would be glad to die, and rest, and not suffer any more. Don't look so horrified;

you don't know what I have gone through, and now it has come to this!"

"Mabel, dear, don't cry so! You break my heart. Poor soul! poor soul!"

Nelly soothed and comforted her as best she could, and this passionate outburst seemed to relieve her; she grew calmer after it, and passed a better night.

The day before that fixed for the operation, she grew more and more restless and excited.

"I felt so strange, driving along to-day," she said. "Everything was so unchanged in the London streets; the same shops, with the same names over them, that I remember before I was married. All the years I was away, the same life going on day after day. It will all be going on just the same to-morrow and the next day. Shall I be alive then, I wonder?"

"I will not have you talk so, Mabel; you are going to put your trust in Heaven, and be a brave woman. You must control these morbid ideas, and help the doctors to do all they can for you, by being calm yourself. You will feel absolutely no pain. Think how merciful that is; and when it is over, and you are strong enough, we will go quietly into the country together, and you will soon get your strength and your looks back again."

"Not to Moreton, darling. Don't think me unkind, Nell, but I couldn't go there. I have never forgotten the agony of those two nights. I could never sleep in that house again."

"I would never ask you to do anything you did not wish. But is it possible you have still such a vivid recollection of that curious fancy of yours?"

"Fancy! it was reality, as truly visible to my eyes then, as you are at this moment. I was haunted by it for years."

"And the man of your dream. Have you ever met him in real life?"

"Thank Heaven, no, for I have always felt that the moment his eyes met mine, my death-warrant would be signed. I have been thinking of him so much just lately, I don't know why. I have never forgotten a feature of his face. I could describe him now."

"What was he like, then? Tell me."

"He was very dark, with a black beard, a face lividly pale; something indescribably sinister and unearthly about the expression of the face; and the eyes—oh, the eyes were horrible!—intensely dark and burning."

"Oh, well, I hope I may never come

across him. He does not sound prepossessing. Was he tall or short? Oh, you could not tell that, of course, for he was driving. Now, I'm not going to let you talk any more rubbish of that kind; I'm going to read to you. Put your feet up, and let me fix this pillow for you."

After a time Mabel dropped off to sleep, lulled by the sweet voice of the reader.

Nelly sat and watched the tired, pathetic sleeping face, so pale and sad, so lined and careworn, and fears began to creep into her heart.

She was awoke that night by a piercing cry, and springing up, found Mabel gasping and wildly agitated. She had been dreaming of that dreadful man again; she had seen his face quite plainly.

"That was because you were talking so much about him this evening, and I am to blame for letting you do it," said Nelly, dreadfully distressed. "Now let me read you off to sleep again, and don't think of that absurd man any more, or I shall get downright angry with you."

The dreaded morning dawned—foggy as November, though it was July; a drizzle falling; the streets greasy with mud; everything gloomy and depressing; the air heavy and stifling.

Mabel had always been excessively sensitive to influences of weather, and this sultry oppression affected her at once. She drooped, and looked faint and exhausted. She sighed heavily, as the hands of the clock crept nearer and nearer to the appointed hour; but Nelly's firmness and composure tranquillised her, and she struggled bravely, and not unsuccessfully, to appear calm.

Everything was in readiness in the room where the operation was to take place, and at last there came a sharp knock at the street-door. Mabel turned deadly pale, and grasped Nelly's hand with a grip that was painful. One or two knocks followed in rapid succession. The ordeal was at hand; the steps of the doctors could be heard coming up the stairs, and their voices in the adjoining room.

The two women sat closely clasped together, listening. Over the mantelpiece there hung an old oil painting, representing our Saviour with the crown of thorns on His brow, with upturned eyes heavy with sorrow and suffering. Mabel fixed a long gaze on it, and her own face grew more calm and resigned.

Presently the nurse came in, and with a quietly firm manner said:

"Everything is ready now, ma'am. Will you come in?"

Still tightly clasping Nelly's hand, Mabel walked in with tolerable firmness. The head surgeon came forward with a few kind and reassuring words. The physician took her hand, and introduced her to two younger men, evidently students, who were standing by with interested faces. On a table near, the instruments were placed, and a cloth had been hastily thrown over them.

In a corner of the room was another man, who had his back towards them, and who seemed busily engaged with something he had taken out of a black bag that was lying open before him. He had not turned round when the patient entered, but still went on with his occupation.

Mabel lay down on the mattress with desperate composure. The surgeon made some enquiry of the man in the corner. It was answered in the affirmative.

"Then we will begin," he said. "This, Mrs. Lawrence, is Mr. Leslie, who will administer the chloroform to you."

The man bowed, and came slowly forward towards the bed.

He was tall, singularly pale, with a black beard, a remarkable expression of face, mysterious and unfathomable, and with the strangest eyes, Nelly thought, she had ever seen. A curious dull light seemed to come from the great pupils.

She was so much engrossed in studying his features, with a vague wonder as to why they seemed familiar to her, that her attention wandered for a minute from the poor patient. Halfway across the large room, he stopped a moment. Then he came straight up to the bed, with his eyes intently fixed on Mabel, as he advanced towards her.

Nelly, who was about to stoop and give her friend one more kiss, and whisper just one last word of hope and encouragement, was horrified, on looking at her face, to see the ghastly change that had come in it. Her eyes were fixed with a fascinated glare on the eyes of the advancing man; every tinge of colour had left her cheeks and lips; her hand in Nelly's grew like ice; her teeth chattered; a tremor passed over her whole frame.

"Mabel, darling, be brave. You will feel nothing; don't fear so; don't give way!"

The poor woman's lips moved, and Nelly stooped down to catch what she said, in spite of the evident disapproval of the surgeon and physician, who were anxious

not to prolong this trying moment. A hoarse voice whispered:

"Save me, Nelly, I shall die! It is the man I saw at your house, the man who drove the hearse! Save me! save me!"

Mr. Leslie was now standing close to the bed, preparing to administer the chloroform.

Nelly, perfectly distracted with conflicting thoughts of what was best to be done, began hurriedly to ask if the operation could not be postponed, if it absolutely must take place to-day. She was sure her friend was not equal to it.

The surgeon looked excessively annoyed.

She was politely begged to leave the room; she was agitating the patient, for whom quiet was essential. Postponement was impossible, as she must be aware.

The door was held open for her. She was fully conscious that her strange manner and extraordinary request, were put down to the violent and hysterical emotion of a tender-hearted woman, unaccustomed to the horrors of an operating room. She still tried to appeal for postponement, urged on by the terror and despair of Mabel's eyes, which seemed to implore her to save her, and which followed her to the door with a dumb, agonised reproach, as the nurse led her away.

She rushed upstairs, and flinging herself down by the side of her bed, prayed frantically and vehemently.

Oh! the long time of suspense and agony! Would it never end?

She was assailed by the keenest remorse and self-reproach. Ought she not at any cost, to have stopped the operation, to have begged a few words alone with the surgeon, and to have told him of the superstitious terror affecting her poor friend?

Ah, yes! that was what ought to have been done, and now it was too late!

If anything should happen, could she ever forgive herself? She felt almost an accomplice in a murder. The look in Mabel's eyes, as she turned away and left her, would haunt her to her dying day!

The silence below grew horrible. How much longer would it last?

She paced up and down distractedly. It seemed an eternity before she heard the sounds of stir and commotion in the room below—the windows flung open, hurrying feet, an agitated murmur of voices.

Someone ran downstairs very hastily. The street-door opened and closed.

Could it be over?

She leaned over the banisters, and listened with a beating heart and dry lips. There was a knock at the street-door; a quick, light step ran up the stairs and into the room. Could anything be wrong? There was a sense of calamity in the very air; it seemed heavy with misfortune.

An idea too terrible to be entertained took deeper root in her mind. She tried to thrust it from her thoughts, but it came back with persistence and added strength. Was it merely a coincidence, that the chloroform administrator resembled so startlingly the man Mabel had seen in her vision, or was it that the vision itself was a warning sent to her?

Mabel's words came back to her: "I have always felt that the moment his eyes met mine, my death-warrant would be signed!"

The suspense grew intolerable; she could bear it no longer; she crept down stair by stair, and listened.

At last the door opened, and the surgeon came out, looking very pale and distressed. He took her by the hand, and in an agitated manner said: "It is my painful duty to tell you to prepare yourself for very sad news. Your poor friend—pray try to be calm! There must have been some latent, unsuspected disease of the heart. All had gone well, when suddenly the pulse ceased. Every possible effort has been made to restore consciousness, but without effect."

"You mean that she is dead?" cried Nelly, in an agonised voice.

"She is dead."

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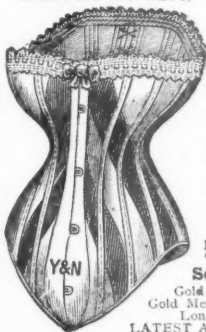
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